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Burlington Elementary School Teacher Named 2015 Vermont Teacher of the Year

Burlington, VT – Rebecca Haslam, a Champlain Elementary School teacher and District Social Studies and Equity Curriculum Coach for grades K-5, has been selected as the 2015 Vermont Teacher of the Year (VT-TOY), the Agency of Education announced today.

In addition to team-teaching first grade, she helps develop curriculum, working with teachers in each of the Burlington School District's six elementary schools to employ resources that are more inclusive in content, language, and practice. Haslam also serves on the district's Equity Council, and has taken on a leadership role in creating professional development sessions for all teachers Pre-K-12 called *Equity Conversations*. The goal of these conversations is to help move all staff, students and community members along the continuum of cultural competency so they can meet the needs of each student in the diverse population in Burlington.

Also recognized are:

- Alternate **Christina Norland**, an elementary school music teacher and PBIS coach at Edmunds Elementary School; and
- Finalist **Alan Crowley**, a high school English teacher at Mississquoi Valley Union High School.

Haslam, Norland and Crowley will be honored by the State Board of Education at an event **December 16**. Luke Foley of Northfield Middle and High School is the current 2014 Vermont Teacher of the Year. Haslam's tenure as 2015 Vermont Teacher of the Year will begin January 1.

"In Rebecca's classroom and in her work with colleagues, diversity is an asset that that she leverages to enrich the learning of both children and adults," said Secretary of Education Holcombe. "We all can learn from this work as Vermont becomes a more diverse state and a member of a more global society. In addition, Rebecca embodies what we know is a hallmark of an outstanding teacher: collaboration to build the collective efficacy of other educators with whom he or she works. Good teaching is very complex, and educators like Rebecca, who share what they have learned and work closely with others to develop and try new practices,

challenge all of us to expand what we think is possible for our students and to deepen our understanding of how we can better support their learning.”

As the 2015 Teacher of the Year, Haslam will travel statewide visiting schools and working with teachers. In addition, she is Vermont’s candidate for the National Teacher of the Year award, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Haslam will travel to Washington, D.C. this spring for a reception at the White House, where she will meet the President.

“I am so grateful for the opportunity to represent all of the outstanding work thousands teachers across the state are doing on behalf of children and families,” said Haslam. “Public education is the foundation of democracy, and as educators, it is our moral imperative and professional responsibility to prepare our nation’s children to be active, engaged participants in our democratic society. For me as a first grade teacher, this starts with teaching children to read and write, and is then sustained by our collective commitment to bringing culturally responsive pedagogy into our classrooms through curriculum and practice. I celebrate this honor as a reflection of Vermont’s commitment to diversity and equity in education, and I sincerely thank my colleagues and administrators for their support, professionalism, and dedication to children.”

Champlain Elementary School Principal Leslie Colomb added: “We are honored at Champlain Elementary School to have Rebecca representing our school, the district, and the state of Vermont as the 2015 Vermont Teacher of the Year. Rebecca’s passion and love of students and families, supportive collaboration with colleagues, and committed leadership within our district has helped Champlain to live our mission of providing opportunities for students to achieve their personal best, become responsible and productive citizens and embrace lifelong learning.”

Burlington School District Interim Superintendent Stephanie Phillips stated, “We are honored to have Rebecca Haslam representing Burlington School District and the State as the 2015 Vermont Teacher of the Year. Rebecca is passionate about her work with students and colleagues and seeks to share her knowledge, evoking passion in others. Her continuous leadership in the classroom and as a District Coach is key to the mission of the District, as we strive towards improved achievement for all students.”

“Rebecca is not only a well-respected classroom teacher, practicing at one of the most pivotal years in a student’s progress, she also embodies the ideal of the teacher leader,” stated Patrick Halladay, BSD Board Chair. “She has led her peers in creating engaging and rigorous curricula to allow students to explore, understand, and celebrate the rich diversity of our district. As such, she has had a profound effect not just on the students who are fortunate to be in her class daily, but also on students, families, and teachers across the district by helping provide us all with the language and perspective to make sense of our community.”

Since 1964, Vermont has participated in this program recognizing outstanding teachers. For more information about the Vermont Teacher of the Year program, go to:
<http://education.vermont.gov/department/awards/teacher-of-the-year>.

For more information about the program and Vermont's selection, contact Jill Remick at (802) 793-1319.

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